

THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

pro bono humani generis

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Please reply to "Suite 115"

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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OJCS /55
Pentagon

May I offer some of my private thoughts on how to respond to CW assaults against the US in a "low-level-conflict" (LLC) context.

There are two outcomes to be averted:

- 1) That such use of CW against us be left unpunished
- 2) That their use of CW results in a military defeat, or great losses on our part, that would be averted were we to use CW in kind.

Besides their immediate cost to us, the result would be to justify and institutionalize the use of CW by the 3d world, (if it is not too optimistic to posit that this has not already occurred.)

By definition, however, LLC is regulated by political as well as military-technical constraints. To recite the obvious, the former greatly aggravate the political costs of the US reacting in kind, with CW. It is difficult to assess these in the heat of battle. All the more reason, despite the intricate scenario-dependency of appropriate reactions, that these be thought out in advance. I very much favor gaming these over a broad range of contingencies.

In general, I would urge that our retaliatory use of CW in LLC be a last resort, understanding that we retain CW precisely as a deterrent, and cannot exclude that they will be used under indicated provocations. It is hard to calculate what the political costs of our using CW would be, however obvious the military provocation is to the forces in the field, vis-a-vis:

- o our own public
- o world opinion, including our Allies!
- o the population of the adversary country

We also have military-technical problems in fielding CW to remote sites, until the binaries become available -- but don't forget the mustard.

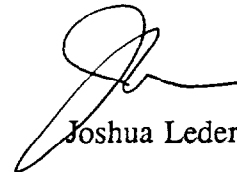
Again by definition, the LLC situation is one where we have ample margin for escalation in the use of conventional weapons, and here is, I suggest, our baseline of initial response. In particular, we should be prepared with targets and plans to respond to CW attack by attacks on the adversary's industrial base, and most particularly on his chemical industry. That may particularly include sites attributed as CW production and storage -- with consequences that would be particularly lethal to the culprits. Yes, there are burdens on intelligence and mission planning, but these are matters that deserve priority for many reasons. This approach is akin

to the US Navy's targetting the Iranian oil platforms as retaliation for the mining of the Gulf -- in my view, that was exactly the right step to take, and it seems to have been efficacious.

It might be a good thing to let it be known that we have a firm resolve and a few cards to play even in settings where an adversary may be led (either through political misjudgment or the holiness of his cause) to believe we would be paralyzed. In particular, we must sustain readiness in CW defense so that we don't present "criminal temptations" to CW attack. A tough nut (like the Libyan mines in the Red Sea, and so many of the hostage-takings) would be clandestine attacks deniable by the adversary. The contingency that a country may have the intention and capability of using CW should be part of our risk-benefit analysis in deciding whom to take on and how. And the guy who feels he has nothing (more) to lose is the riskiest of all to deal with.

Finally, recall that there were many false alarms about CW during WW-1 (amidst many real ones), and a couple in WW-2, (absent any real). We may even be enticed into shooting from the hip. Keeping the political dimensions in mind, we have to be attuned to collecting juridical evidence, as well as military warning, with our sensors. I don't think that has been part of their design. The time needed to resolve the potential ambiguities of "the case" also complicates any thought of preparing for a CW response as part of our first tactical reaction. Prolonged and repeated use of CW by the other side, especially after a graduated reaction on our part is another story. And we must never allow him to think we will never reply with CW.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Joshua Lederberg', written over a horizontal line.

Joshua Lederberg